

Agenda Item: 05.02



## Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin Board Meeting

Date:

2 February 2015

Title:

**Safeguarding Children and Young People  
at Risk**

Author:

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For Information

For Decision X

Executive Summary:

Financial Implications:

None specifically

Equality and Diversity:

None specifically

Public Engagement:

None specifically

Legal Impact:

None specifically

Recommendations:

- Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin board are recommended to note the contents of this report

Is there a need to consider inclusion in the Corporate Risk Register?

No

# **healthwatch** Telford and Wrekin

## **Safeguarding Children & Young People at Risk**

Version DRAFT v1.1

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## 1. Purpose and scope

Our organisation aims to create an environment where children and young people at risk are valued and safe, and where their welfare is paramount.

There are several aspects to protecting children and young people at risk from unsuitable people. These include safe recruitment practices, procedures for dealing with allegations and guidance about appropriate behaviour.

Abuse can take many forms including physical, emotional or sexual mistreatment or lack of care that leads to injury or harm and can occur in many environments.

Through this policy our organisation recognises the vulnerability of children and young people and their right without exception to protection from abuse.

It is our intention that staff, board members and volunteers place paramount importance on promoting the welfare of children and young people at risk and recognise their public and professional responsibility to protect them from any form of abuse.

This commitment includes accepting responsibility for the protection of children and young people at risk and ensuring that all concerns about their safety or well being which come to our attention will be followed up and dealt with as quickly and sensitively as possible.

It is our policy to work within the Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire safeguarding procedures at all times; which set out how organisations and individuals should work together to safeguard and promote the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk respectively.

The Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Safeguarding Children Procedures describe the roles and responsibilities of agencies and actions to be taken where there are concerns about a child or young person's safety or welfare and can be accessed via [www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk](http://www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk).

This includes:

- Protection from maltreatment
- Preventing impairment of health or development
- Ensuring children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care, to enable optimum life chances.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin will ensure that the organisation is registered to receive automatic electronic updates regarding changes to the procedures and will ensure they are implemented within the organisation.

## 2. Procedure and responsibilities

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin will name a Lead Person to obtain up to date information on child or young people at risk protection issues from Telford and Wrekin and Shropshire Safeguarding Board and to liaise with Children's or Adults Social Care Departments or the police where necessary.

Our working practices reflect our commitment to the safety and welfare of children and young people at risk, this includes following the recruitment and selection procedures for staff or volunteers set out in the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Procedures and Shropshire procedures.

All staff and volunteers are provided with an induction that makes them aware of the organisations policies and procedures, including those for safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children and Young people at risk.

Whilst those working with children or young people at risk will receive basic safeguarding training, the nominated safeguarding representative will receive additional training to ensure safeguarding issues are addressed properly.

As individuals we are not experts in recognising abuse but will take all suspicions or allegations made seriously and act swiftly to raise and record concerns. These concerns may arise from feelings, observations or statements made by a child or young person.

Concerns may be discussed with the Lead Person or a line manager who will then bring the written report to the attention of Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Children's Board. It is not our responsibility to investigate suspicions, question the child or vulnerable adult, or interview their carers, but to accurately record and pass on any concerns.

## 3. Information sharing

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin follows the procedures set out in Telford and Wrekin Information Sharing protocol which can be accessed through the Telford and Wrekin child protection procedures.

## 4. Safe environment

When transport is organised, consideration will be given to the appropriate provision of safety seats or seat belts for children within the vehicle.

Activities will be planned to take account of the age, ability and needs of those involved.

Where use of the internet by children or young people is permitted the guidance will be followed [www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk](http://www.telfordsafeguardingboard.org.uk).

#### 4. Whistle blowing / complaints

The term 'whistle blowing' is used to describe incidents where people report an alleged wrong doing within an organisation.

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin recognises that staff and volunteers have the right and responsibility to raise any matters of concern regarding poor practice at work. The organisations complaints procedure allows people a safe way of voicing any complaints or concerns and offers.

#### 5. Monitoring and evaluation

The Lead Person will keep a record of all incident report forms completed. The Manager and relevant staff will be made aware that an incident has been recorded and of its later outcome.

A log will be kept of all staff and volunteers working within Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin who have undergone a DBS check.

A log will be kept of any staff attending Child or Adult at Risk Protection training.

*Adopted by the Board of Directors: [Date]*

*Signed on behalf of the Board:*

*Review date:* January 2016 (or when updates provided by the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding Board)

## Appendix 1: Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin organisational safeguarding principles

Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin principles and codes of behaviour are applicable to all staff and volunteers involved in the organisation:

1. Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is committed to providing high quality services.
2. As an organisation, we will place the needs of vulnerable children and young people at risk as a first concern and always act to ensure their safety and protection.
3. We recognise that the best results are achieved in partnership and are committed to working in this way wherever possible.
4. We recognise that some groups of children and young people may be more vulnerable to abuse, for example those with disabilities.
5. The organisations policies and procedures apply to all irrespective of gender, ethnicity, disability, sexual orientation or religion.
6. All employees and volunteers are expected to contribute to a positive working environment and to conduct themselves accordingly.
7. Our code of behaviour recognises that the following behaviours will not be tolerated:
  - Sexual conduct.
  - Lending or borrowing money or property.
  - Giving or receiving gifts (see accepting gifts policy).
  - Exclusive or secretive relationships.
  - Taking people who use our services to your home.
  - Physical restraint.
8. All employees, Board members and volunteers are expected to contribute to a positive working environment and to conduct themselves accordingly, this includes:
  - Treating others with respect.
  - Remembering that someone else may misinterpret their actions no matter how well intentioned.
  - Recognising that special caution is required when discussing sensitive issues.
  - Challenging unacceptable behaviour and reporting all allegations and suspicions of abuse.

## Appendix 2: The main types of abuse

Abuse can take a variety of forms and spans all classes and cultures. Whilst no one person is ever in the position of knowing that total picture regarding the well being of any child or vulnerable adult it is everyone's responsibility to record information and pass on concerns.

Abuse and neglect are forms of maltreatment that can be caused by inflicting harm or by failing to act to prevent harm. Abuse can occur in a family or in an institutional or community setting; by those known to them or, more rarely, by a stranger. An adult or adults, child or children may cause the abuse.

Abuse against adults can be defined as, "A single or repeated act or a lack of appropriate action [...] which causes harm or distress to another person." Abuse might be physical, sexual, psychological, discriminatory, financial or any combination of these. Neglect is also a form of abuse.

It is generally accepted that there are four main forms of child abuse. The following definitions are based on those from the NSPCC Safeguarding Children procedures:

**Neglect** - the persistent failure to meet a child's basic physical and/or psychological needs, likely to result in the serious impairment of the child's health or development. Neglect may occur during pregnancy as a result of maternal substance abuse.

Once a child is born, neglect may involve a parent or carer failing to provide adequate food and clothing, shelter including exclusion from home or abandonment, failing to protect a child from physical and emotional harm or danger, failure to ensure adequate supervision including the use of inadequate care-takers, or the failure to ensure access to appropriate medical care or treatment. It may also include neglect of, or unresponsiveness to, a child's basic emotional needs.

**Physical abuse** - may involve hitting, shaking, throwing, poisoning, burning or scalding, drowning, suffocating, or otherwise causing physical harm to a child. Physical harm may also be caused when a parent or carer fabricates the symptoms of, or deliberately induces illness in a child.

**Sexual abuse** - involves forcing a child or enticing a child or young person to take part in sexual activities, including prostitution, whether or not the child is aware of what is happening. The activities may involve physical contact, including penetrative (e.g. rape, buggery or oral sex) or non-penetrative acts. They may include non-contact activities, such as involving children in looking at, or in the production of, pornographic materials or watching sexual activities, or encouraging children to behave in sexually inappropriate ways.

**Emotional abuse** - the persistent emotional maltreatment of a child such as to cause severe and persistent adverse effects on their emotional development.

It may involve conveying to children that they are worthless or unloved, inadequate, or valued only insofar as they meet the needs of another person.

It may feature age or developmentally inappropriate expectations being imposed on children.

These may include interactions that are beyond the child's developmental capability, as well as overprotection and limitation of exploration and learning, or preventing the child participating in normal social interaction. It may involve serious bullying causing children frequently to feel frightened or in danger, or the exploitation or corruption of children. Some level of emotional abuse is involved in all types of maltreatment of a child, though it may occur alone.

The impact of the above types of abuse and further guidance regarding definitions and the impact of the abuse of disabled children, bullying, self harm/suicidal behaviour, female genital mutilation, forced marriage can be found in the Telford and Wrekin Safeguarding procedures.

Immediate action must be taken to record and pass on concerns in cases where:

- the child, vulnerable adult and/or carer is unwilling to talk about an injury or gives an explanation which appears inconsistent, or
- there are a series of unexplained injuries, or
- there is a significant change in a child's or adults at risk behaviour, or
- they or a third party disclose an incident.

If a member of staff or volunteer has a concern or if someone discloses abuse, they should:

1. Take immediate action if there is a need of urgent or medical attention.
2. Keep calm. Do not show shock or distress.
3. Listen.
4. Indicate you believe them. Resist the temptation to suggest what might have happened (don't ask leading questions) and be aware of body language.
5. Do not ask them to repeat themselves/part of their story.
6. Do not agree to keep secrets. Explain that you will, "have to share the information with someone else" to help them.



7. Record your conversation and bring it to the attention of the Lead Person or line manager (see Appendix 3). In an emergency situation call the Adult or Children's Social Care Duty Team for advice.
8. It is the responsibility of the Lead Person to consider the information and to decide what action needs to be taken. If the Lead Person needs help in making a decision, they should speak to a manager or a member of social care. The decision made should be clearly recorded and if no further action is considered necessary, the reason why should be documented and the form placed on file.
9. If it is decided that a referral should be made, the Lead Person will inform the duty officer at the Children's Social Care Team, who has a duty to investigate and ensure the safety of the child. It is important that they are clear about:
  - The nature of concerns.
  - How and why they have arisen.
  - The apparent needs of the child or vulnerable adult.
10. The referral should be followed up in writing (pro-forma available in Telford and Wrekin HW procedures) and sent to the relevant social care office within 24 hours of the telephone referral. A copy should be placed in the relevant organisational file.
11. Formal acknowledgement of the referral should be received within three working days of the receipt of the written referral. If no response is received the referrer should re refer the matter to social care.
12. If you have a concern or receive an allegation about a member of staff, or volunteer, who works with children or adults at risk that causes concerns that they have:
  - Behaved in a way which is harmful.
  - Possibly committed a criminal offence.
  - Behaved towards a child or vulnerable adult in a way that indicates s/he is unsuitable to work with them.

Discuss your concerns with your Lead Person.

However, if your concern is about your Lead Person, you can also approach any line manager. If you feel unable to discuss your concern with a member of staff then you can contact the Social Care duty team.

### Appendix 3: Child Protection / Adults at Risk Incident Report Form

#### Details of person completing this form:

Name:

Name of person form to be passed to:

Date form completed:

Time:

Date/time you discussed this incident with your Lead Person or Line Manager

Date:

Time:

#### Primary cause for concern

NEGLECT

PHYSICAL ABUSE

SEXUAL ABUSE

BULLYING

EMOTIONAL ABUSE

OTHER.....

#### Details of person you are concerned about:

Give as much detail as you can:

First Name:

Surname:

Age:

Gender:

Address:

Name of parent/carers:

Phone number for parent:

Have they been informed:

Yes/No

School/daycentre (if applicable):

**Any other Identifying details:**

**Details of Incident**

Time it happened:

Date it happened:

Where it happened:

**Describe the Incident or Injury**

*Include what you saw, heard and observed in as much detail as possible.*

*Describe any obvious changes in behaviour or physical injury such as cuts or bruises and where on the body they were positioned. Draw a diagram overleaf if you wish.*

**Was anyone else present?**

*Give identifying details of this person, e.g. name, contact details, description:*

**Anything else which you feel might be helpful or any needs identified concerning their immediate safety?**

Your Signature: .....

Date: ..... Time: .....

Referral to Children or Adults Social Care

To be completed by organisations Lead Person:

.....

Date referred: ..... Time: .....

Name of Children or Adults Social Care Officer: .....

Organisations Lead Person signature:.....

## Appendix 4: Identifying concerns and removing barriers

Concerns may come to the attention of staff and volunteers in a number of ways including:

- Through observation - behaviour may indicate that it is likely someone is being abused.
- Through disclosure - the child or vulnerable adult may disclose abuse.
- Through information - provided by parents, carers, other people or agencies.
- Through signs of physical injury for which there seems to be no satisfactory explanation.

There may be barriers to reporting abuse including the power of relationships and the skilled way that abusers target their victims. They may not tell because they:

- Are scared because they have been threatened.
- Believe they will be taken away from their home.
- Believe they are to blame.
- Feel embarrassed.
- Feel guilty.
- Don't want to get the abuser into trouble.
- Have communication or learning disabilities.
- May not have the vocabulary to say what has happened.
- Are afraid they won't be believed.
- Believe they have told, maybe by dropping hints, but haven't been believed so don't bother again.

Abuse thrives on secrecy and needs to be handled in a sensitive, accepting way. However, through clear policies, procedures and training Healthwatch Telford and Wrekin is committed to safeguarding children and young people at risk.